

# Combined Future Plans Surveys and Survey of Recent Graduates: Academic Year 2015-2016 Graduates Introduction, Research Methods, and Response Rates

This series of reports presents combined results from the December 2015 and May 2016 Future Plans Surveys and the September 2016 Survey of Recent Graduates. The Future Plans Survey (FPS) and Survey of Recent Graduates (SRG) are designed to collect specific information on students' plans following graduation, including detailed information on employment, graduate/professional school attendance, and participation in career-preparation activities while at NC State.

This introductory report provides an overview of the research methods and response rates. Additional reports on the overall survey results, college reports, department summaries, as well as copies of the questionnaires, can be found on the [OIRP website](#).

## Research Methods

The Future Plans Survey is administered to all graduating seniors in the weeks surrounding December and May graduation. In Fall 2015, commencement was on December 18, and the FPS was in the field from December 9, 2015 through January 15, 2016. In Spring 2016, commencement was on May 7, and the FPS was in the field from April 28 through May 27. (The December survey has a longer post-graduation field time due to winter holidays.)

The Survey of Recent Graduates, administered in September, was developed as a follow-up survey to the FPS. The SRG is aimed at reaching out to graduates from the past year who indicated that at the time they completed the FPS they had not yet found full-time employment, had not yet decided on or been accepted into graduate school, or were still undecided on their plans. In addition, graduates from the previous academic year who did not complete the FPS in December or May, or who graduated in Summer I, are also invited to participate in the SRG. The SRG, therefore, enables us to provide a more complete picture of the employment and further education of NC State's graduates from the previous academic year, taking into consideration those who might have taken a few months beyond graduation to obtain employment or gain acceptance to graduate/professional school. The September 2016 Survey of Recent Graduates was in the field from August 31 through September 28.

3,248 of the 4,933 graduates receiving baccalaureate degrees in AY15-16 were invited to complete the September 2016 Survey of Recent Graduates. Of those invited, 29.9 percent graduated in December 2016, 65.2 percent graduated in May 2016, and 4.9 percent graduated in Summer I 2016. Seventy-four percent of those invited were graduates who had not completed the FPS (73.7%), while one-fourth of the graduates invited had completed the December or May Future Plans Survey and were invited to take the SRG in order to follow up on their status of employment or plans for graduate school (26.3%).

**Table 1: Population Invited to Take the Survey of Recent Graduates, by Semester Graduated**

Semester Graduated	Graduates		Invited to take SRG				Total invited to take SRG	
			Dec/May FPS Nonrespondents		Dec/May FPS Respondents*			
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
December 2015	1,365	27.7%	673	28.1%	299	35.0%	972	29.9%
May 2016	3,402	69.0%	1,564	65.4%	554	64.8%	2,118	65.2%
Summer I 2016	166	3.4%	156	6.5%	2	0.2%	158	4.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,933</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>2,393</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>855</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3,248</b>	<b>100%</b>

\*FPS respondents who indicated that at the time they completed the FPS they had not yet found full-time employment, had not yet decided on or been accepted into graduate school, or were still undecided on their plans.

When administering the December and May Future Plans Surveys, eligible respondents are identified using NC State's Application for Degree file. The population for the September Survey of Recent Graduates is based on the graduation file from the previous academic year and response sets from the December and May Future Plans Surveys. The final population for the combined surveys, therefore, includes all alumni who graduated in December 2015, May 2016, or Summer I 2016.

### Response Rates

As shown in Table 1, a total of 4,933 undergraduate students received baccalaureate degrees from NC State in Fall 2015 (n=1,365), Spring 2016 (n=3,402), or the first summer session of 2016 (n=166). 3,141 of these graduates responded to the December 2015 FPS (n=542), May 2016 FPS (n=1,527), or the September 2016 SRG (n=1,072). Thus, the response rate for the combined surveys for the 2015-2016 academic year is 63.7 percent. (To clarify, if a student responded to their FPS in December or May, and then completed the follow-up SRG in September, only their record of responses from the September SRG - - i.e., the most current information - - is included in the combined dataset used in these reports.)

Participation in the combined surveys varied by college. The College of Textiles had the highest response rate, with 74 percent of AY15-16 graduates participating in the survey. Following with the next highest response rates were the College of Education (68.4%), College of Design (67.4%), and College of Engineering (67.3%). The College of Engineering is slightly overrepresented in the overall results, with their students making up only 24.9 percent of the population, yet 26.3 percent of the survey respondents.

**Table 2: Response Rate, Overall and by College**

College/School	AY 15-16 Population		FPS/SRG Respondents		Response Rate
	N	%	N	%	%
College of Agriculture and Life Sciences	564	11.4%	341	10.9%	60.5%
College of Design	141	2.9%	95	3.0%	67.4%
College of Education	133	2.7%	91	2.9%	68.4%
College of Engineering	1,228	24.9%	827	26.3%	67.3%
College of Natural Resources	339	6.9%	213	6.8%	62.8%
College of Humanities and Social Sciences	917	18.6%	567	18.1%	61.8%
College of Sciences	590	12.0%	359	11.4%	60.8%
College of Textiles	246	5.0%	182	5.8%	74.0%
Poole College of Management	731	14.8%	440	14.0%	60.2%
Division of Academic and Student Affairs	44	0.9%	26	0.8%	59.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,933</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>3,141</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>63.7%</b>

Table 3 provides an overview of from which specific survey the responses included in this report are drawn. Among those respondents who graduated in December 2015, the December FPS record was used for 63.9 percent of them, and the September SRG for the remaining 35.8 percent – 18.2 percent who had previously completed the December FPS but indicated at that time they either had not obtained employment or knew where they would be attending graduate/professional school, and 17.6 percent who had not responded to their December FPS. Among those respondents who graduated in May 2016, the May FPS record was used for 68.2 percent of them, and the September SRG for 31.6 percent – 14.2 percent who had previously completed the May FPS but indicated at that time they either had not obtained employment or knew where they would be attending graduate/professional school, and 17.4 percent who had not responded to their May FPS.

Of the 3,141 survey records included in these reports, 17.3 percent come from the December 2015 FPS, 48.6 percent from the May 2016 FPS, and the remaining 34.1 percent from the September 2016 SRG. The September SRG responses were comprised slightly more of those who had not responded to the FPS (19.1%)

than those who had (15.0%). Altogether, the make-up of the combined FPS/SRG results closely mirrors that of the population, with 26.7 percent of the respondents coming from those who graduated in December 2015, 70.8 percent from those who graduated in May 2016, and 2.4 percent from those who graduated in Summer I 2016.

**Table 3: Survey Results Included, by Semester Graduated**

Survey Results Included in Report	Graduated December 2015		Graduated May 2016		Graduated Summer I 2016		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
December FPS	537	63.9%	3	0.1%	2	2.6%	542	17.3%
May FPS	2	0.2%	1,518	68.2%	7	9.2%	1,527	48.6%
September SRG	301	35.8%	704	31.6%	67	88.2%	1,072	34.1%
<i>September SRG: FPS respondent</i>	153	18.2%	317	14.2%	1	1.3%	471	15.0%
<i>September SRG: FPSnonrespondent</i>	148	17.6%	387	17.4%	66	86.8%	601	19.1%
<b>Total</b>	840	26.7%	2,225	70.8%	76	2.4%	3,141	100%

For more information about the Future Plans Survey contact:  
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